

Response to Office Action Mailed February 6, 2006

A. Claims In The Case

Claims 1-28 have been rejected. Claims 1, 3, 14, 15, 21, 23, and 24 have been amended. Claims 13, 16, and 22 have been canceled. Claims 1-12, 14-15, 17-21, and 25-28 are pending in the case.

B. The Claims Are Not Anticipated By The Cited Art Pursuant To 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 7-10, and 13-20 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,696,671 to Oliver ("Oliver"). Applicant respectfully disagrees with these rejections.

Amended claim 1 recites:

1. A water irrigation system, comprising:
 - a computer system;
 - a sensing unit in communication with the computer system, wherein the sensing unit comprises a solar panel, wherein the solar panel is configured to receive sunlight, and wherein the sensing unit is configured to provide output that is a function of the received sunlight to the computer system;
 - wherein the computer system is configured to receive community irrigation instructions; and
 - wherein the computer system is configured to:
 - assess solar insolation based on the output from the sensing unit;
 - and
 - control irrigation of a zone to be irrigated at least partially based on the community irrigation instructions, and
 - inhibit irrigation of the zone when the assessed solar insolation exceeds a predetermined value.

Support for amendments to claim 21 may be found, for example, in Applicant's specification, which states:

In an embodiment, solar panel 132 in combination with sensing unit 102 may provide a signal that is a function of received sunlight to a computer system of a water irrigation system. In some embodiments, a computer system may assess a signal that is a function of sunlight received by a solar panel to inhibit irrigation during daylight hours. In some embodiments, a computer system may assess solar insolation from one or more signals that are a function of sunlight received by a solar panel. In certain embodiments, irrigation may be inhibited when assessed solar insolation near or in a zone to be irrigated exceeds a selected value. Inhibiting irrigation during daylight hours or when solar insolation exceeds a selected value may promote more efficient water usage by reducing an amount of moisture lost to evaporation.

(Specification, pg. 21, line 27 - pg. 22, line 5)

Applicant submits that the cited art does not appear to teach or suggest all of the features of amended claim 1, including, but not limited to, the feature of "[inhibiting] irrigation of the zone when the assessed solar insolation exceeds a predetermined value." As such, Applicant respectfully request removal of the rejection of claim 1, and the claims dependent from claim 1 (i.e., claims 2-12, 14-15, and 17-20)

C. The Claims Are Not Obvious Over The Cited Art Pursuant To 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 2 and 4-6 as being unpatentable over Oliver. For at least the same reasons cited above, Applicant submits that claims 2 and 4-6 are allowable over Oliver.

The Examiner has rejected claim 3 as being unpatentable over Oliver in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,418,466 to Watson et al. ("Watson"). Applicant submits that, for at least the same

reasons cited above, claim 3 is allowable over the combination of Oliver in view of Watson.

The Examiner has rejected claim 11 as being unpatentable over Oliver in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,369,719 to Tracy et al. ("Tracy"). Applicant submits that, for at least the same reasons cited above, claim 11 is allowable over the combination of Oliver in view of Tracy.

The Examiner has rejected claim 12 as being unpatentable over Oliver in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,761,312 to Zelikovitz et al. ("Zelikovitz"). Applicant submits that, for at least the same reasons cited above, claim 12 is allowable over the combination of Oliver in view of Zelikovitz.

The Examiner has rejected claims 21-28 as being unpatentable over Oliver in view of Watson. Applicant respectfully disagrees with these rejections.

Amended claim 21 recites:

21. A method of controlling irrigation, comprising:
receiving sunlight with a solar panel;
 using the received sunlight to produce electricity;
 supplying at least a portion of the electricity to at least a portion of a water irrigation system;
receiving community irrigation instructions with the water irrigation system;
 assessing solar insolation based on the received sunlight;
 controlling irrigation of a zone to be irrigated by the water irrigation system at least partially based on the community irrigation instructions; and
 inhibiting irrigation of the zone if the assessed solar insolation exceeds a predetermined value.

Support for amendments to claim 1 may be found, for example, in Applicant's specification at page 21, line 27 - pg. 22, line 5.

Applicant submits that the cited art does not appear to teach or suggest all of the features of amended claim 21, including, but not limited to, the feature of “inhibiting irrigation of the zone when the assessed solar insolation exceeds a predetermined value.” As such, Applicant respectfully request removal of the rejection of claim 21, and the claims dependent from claim 21 (i.e., claims 22-28)

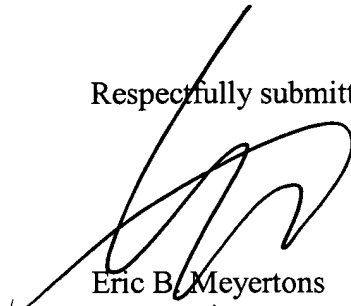
D. Summary

Based on the above, Applicant submits that all claims are now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Clark, et al.
10/809,994

If any extension of time is required, Applicant hereby requests the appropriate extension of time. If any fees are inadvertently omitted or if any additional fees are required or have been overpaid, please appropriately charge or credit those fees to Meyertons, Hood, Kivlin, Kowert & Goetzel, P.C. Deposit Account Number 50-1505/5853-00506/EBM

Respectfully submitted,



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